

INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Austrian Communist Reaction
to Koerner's Election

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1. The Austrian Communist Party (KPOe) has expressed strong satisfaction with the election of Theodor Koerner to the presidency on 27 May 1951. Friedl Fuernberg and other leading Communists regard this victory of the Austrian Socialist Party (SPOe) as the most encouraging development for the KPOe since 1945. KPOe officials on a lower level consider the election results important for reasons of party prestige, since SPOe members admit that Koerner could not have been elected without 220,000 Communist votes. Although warned not to expect the establishment of a People's Democracy overnight, ordinary members of the KPOe are now optimistic about the strength of the Left Bloc in Austria.
2. Soviet officials of USIA attach great importance to the election of Koerner. They state that, "in the event of a revolution," a Socialist would be a convenient tool, whereas an opposition president could be expected to form a government in exile.
3. As a result of Koerner's election, Austrian Communists are now working for unity with the Socialists along the following lines:
 - (a) The City Directorate of the Free Austrian Youth (FOeJ) hopes to arrange joint meetings with the Socialist Youth (SJ) in an effort to assimilate these two organizations on a group level (sic). To date the SJ has failed to respond to invitations of the FOeJ.
 - (b) The KPOe Landesleitung has ordered Communist organizations in USIA plants to cease all discrimination against Socialists. Actions already in progress against SPOe personnel are to be suspended or rescinded immediately.

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[REDACTED] (c) According to the same KPOe Landesleitung directive, KPOe organizations must make every effort to persuade the SPOe rank and file to join in a common front with Communists for the defeat of reactionary forces and the conclusion of a satisfactory Fifth Wage and Price Agreement.